



Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
PERMITTING SERVICES
AUGUST 2003



Robert C. Hubbard
Director

Well, summer has finally arrived gather on the neighbors' classy tas, crank up some Buffet, fire up time. Sitting there enjoying the groovy sounds may start you be to have a deck of your own, 10 ning breezes and no pesky beasts to ruin your fun. So, Lester, who built this tasty deck "Ricky T. Bilt Carpentry." who rounds up the shopping



AS I SEE IT ...
by **DPS DIRECTOR**
ROBERT HUBBARD
A Cautionary Tale

in Washington. It's time to new deck, mix up some margari-the grill, and settle in for a good engaging company and the thinking about how great it would feet above grade, with cool eve-gnats and other nettlesome you ask your neighbor, "Hey for you?" Lester replies, You know Ricky. He's the guy carts at Walmart."

"I didn't know ole Ricky T. was a carpenter," you say.

Says your neighbor, "He sure is! He's got a pick-up truck, a 'Skil' saw, a Home Depot nail pouch, and even one of those thick pencils. Best of all, he's dirt cheap and fast--he built this deck in less then a day. Ricky T. told me he keeps his cost down working out of his truck and only hiring day labor."

"Is he licensed?" you ask.

"No need for a license," your neighbor reassures you. "His daddy, when he wasn't incarcerated, taught him the trade, and his handshake is better then any license the government issues. Besides, licenses and permits only jack-up the costs."

Boy, does this sound sweet! You can have an incredible affordable deck and maybe even save enough money to install that hot tub you've been fantasizing about (for therapeutic reasons, of course). Back to reality: Major Lance's "Monkey Time" is booming from the CD player, and you ask your wife to dance. Lost in the rhythm, you bust your moves in perfect time to the music. In mid-gyration, your hip hits the guardrail, and, suddenly, you're looking up at your wife's horror-stricken face as you disappear over the edge of the deck. Eight feet later, supinely gasping for breath, you see your wife and assorted party-goers arrayed above you, mouths agape. As you contemplate your gross humiliation and Ricky T.'s carpentry talents, your fellow revelers began to sway in unison and descend, haplessly, towards you.



After your release from the hospital, you learn that Ricky T. Bilt has a long history of shoddy workmanship. In this case, his inferior knowledge of basic carpentry and building codes led to the failure of the guardrail and deck. As a result, just about everyone on your block is hobbled, and your neighbor is ruined because his insurer refused to cover damages and personal injury claims because he failed to comply with local codes and had the deck constructed without the required permits.

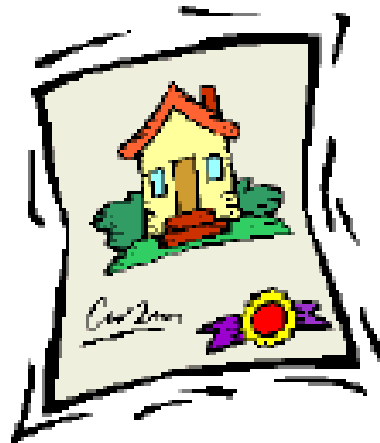
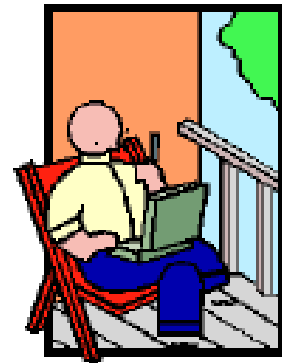
This story is fictitious, but the scenario is real. Not a summer goes by in this or in neighboring jurisdictions that we don't hear of incidents similar to this one. Already this year, a horrendous deck collapse took the life of many young adults in Chicago.

Property owners, you owe it to yourself, your families, and your friends and neighbors to deal with licensed contractors who observe all code requirements. Get several estimates for any building project, and demand to see evidence of contractors' licenses and bonding. Remember, if an estimate sounds too good to be true, it probably is, and you're undertaking serious risks by proceeding with construction, especially if the contractor minimizes the importance of building permits.

Contractors, you are responsible for the work that you perform. Accordingly, be sure that your crews are trained in the trades that they practice. Follow local codes and obtain required licenses and

permits. Take advantage of the expertise of our plan-review and inspection staffs as you design and build a structure. If a client wants to deviate from an approved plan, please amend the permit so that a second set of eyes can review the construction documents. And, please report work that you see being performed without permits. Together, we can assure a safe, healthy, beautiful, and long-lasting built environment in Montgomery County.

Have a safe and happy summer!



BUILDING CONSTRUCTION



CODES CORNER



News Bulletins for the
Codes Professional

The IBC

In the 2000 International Building Code (“IBC”), some of the construction-type designations that we have used for years have changed.

The first thing you’ll notice is the change from plain numbers to roman numerals. This change was designed to clearly distinguish IBC provisions from those in BOCA and other model codes.

Another obvious change is that there is no longer a “type 2C” construction type. The basic requirements for 2C have been transferred to the new “IIB” category.

You’ll notice other changes as well. The old construction “type 1A” requirements have, for the most part, been replaced with the old 1B, but, the match is not exact. Similarly, exact matches don’t exist for other categories that have shifted up the construction-class scale. Also, please take a second look at the new construction types in tables 601 and 602, because they aren’t what they used to be. In this regard, remember that you’ll have to provide accurate construction-type information, among other things, with all permit submittals.

Not to further addle your brain about IBC changes, but there has been a little *regrouping* (no pun intended) in Chapter 3, “Use and Occupancy Classification” compared to Chapter 3 in the Building Officials and Codes Administrators

(“BOCA”) code. If you’ve wondered about the meaning of terms like “Use Group,” or “Building Group,” or “Occupancy in Group,” please read on.

The term “Use Group” does not appear in IBC 2000. The proper term is “Building Group,” which can be broken down further to “Occupancies in Groups,” or the equally acceptable “Occupancy Classification.”

Also, occupancies within the previous BOCA groups have been reshuffled. Because most restaurants are similar to nightclubs regarding lighting and alcohol consumption, they are now in Building Group “A-2,” along with nightclubs. Places of Worship have been moved into “A-3.” The revised “A-4” Occupancy Classification now includes “indoor sporting events with spectator seating,” such as those conducted in skating rinks, swimming pools, and tennis courts. All child-care facilities, irrespective of length of stay, were classified as “I-2” under BOCA. In the IBC 2000, I-2 is strictly for child-care facilities that offer 24-hour care. “I-4” has been added for child-care and adult-care facilities that provide services for fewer than 24 hours.

Confused? Our best advice is to do your research before deciding on a Building Group/Occupancy Classification in the IBC.

Electrical

DPS intends to submit legislation to the County Council recommending the adoption of the 2002 National Electrical Code (“NEC”), with a targeted adoption date of January 1, 2004. Replacing the 1996 NEC with the 2000 edition will reduce the number of local amendments to the NEC by approximately 50 percent. This code change is part of the departmental effort to improve public service by keeping local amendments to a minimum.

Mechanical

DPS has received a number of questions about licensure and permit requirements for pre-fab and naturally fired fireplaces. Pursuant to ad-

vice from the state Attorney General's office, DPS would like its customers to know the following :

Montgomery County will not issue a mechanical permit for natural-gas-fired fireplaces. This work will continue to be regulated and inspected by WSSC.

A State HVACR license is not required for installation of pre-fab fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves, etc. A mechanical permit is still required.

We are currently working on licensing requirements for installation of LP gas systems. (Neither the state nor WSSC regulates the installation of these systems.)

Fire Protection

On July 22, 2003, Montgomery County Councilmember Phil Andrews introduced legislation to require fire sprinklers in all newly constructed single-family dwellings. The Council will hold a public hearing about this legislation on September 16, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

SCHEDULING INSPECTIONS

DPS now offers three ways to schedule commercial and residential building inspections. **YOU** choose the method that works best for you.

Schedule inspections on-line.

You may schedule inspections at your convenience, between the hours of 5am and 9pm!

- Go to <http://permits.emontgomery.org>.
- Under *Option 1*, enter the type of permit and the permit number (This will bring you to a permit summary page where you will find details about your permit.).
- Select *Schedule Inspection*.
- Select an inspection that you want to schedule.
- Select a date in the next seven business days (cut-off time for next day appointments is **12:00 noon**.)
- Enter the Contact ID printed on your permit exactly as shown on your permit.

- A.M. or P.M. Preference? (Times cannot be guaranteed and specific appointments cannot be made.)
- *Notes*: Please provide a contact name and phone number for inspections for Sediment Control permits and for Public Right-of-Way permits. Also, any information that will help the inspector can be noted here.
Click *Schedule*. Make a note of your inspection-confirmation number.

Schedule inspections by phone.

DPS now offers an interactive-voice-response ("IVR") system. The IVR is available between 5:00 am and 9:00 pm and allows you to schedule an inspection, cancel an inspection, and get inspection results. In addition, you may check on the status of your application or have information faxed to you.

- Call 240-777-6210.
You should know your:
Application/Permit number
Application/Permit type
Inspection type
Desired inspection date (cut-off time for next day appointments is **12:00 noon**)
Follow the prompts.

Schedule inspections with a Permit Technician.

During business hours (7:30 am – 4:00 pm) you may speak with a Permit Technician ("PT") who can assist you with scheduling your inspections or answer any questions that you may have about your permit or the inspection process.

Call 240-777-6210, and press *0 to be transferred to a PT. Because of the volume of calls we receive, you may experience a wait time. Mornings are a peak time for calls, and the wait time may be significant.

Last year, the DPS inspection line received more than 47,000 requests for information and inspections. So far this year, we've received more than 28,000 calls. With three ways for you to get information and schedule or cancel inspections, DPS has tripled its efforts to serve you better!

Building, Electrical and Mechanical Codes adopted in Montgomery County						
YEAR (edition)	CODE	ADOPTED	EFFECTIVE	ORDINANCE NO.	EXECUTIVE REGULATION NO.	
1951	NEC	*10/25/1951	April 1952	*October 23, 1952		
1955	BOCA	10/21/58	November 20, 1958		3-223	
1955	BOCA-AM	10/10/58			3-228	
1956	NEC		March 1957			
1959	NEC		April 1962			
1960	BOCA	2/8/62	March 8, 1962		4-123	
1960	BOCA	2 SUPPL'T			5-19	
1965	BOCA	8/9/68	September 9, 1966		5-175	
1968	NEC		December 1970			
1970	BOCA	3/18/75	April 17, 1975		8-160	
1971	NEC		September 1974			
1975	BOCA(B)&(M)		May 8, 1977			
1975	NEC		Jan 1978			
1978	BOCA(B) BOCA (M)	BOCA ENERGY CODE	September 2, 1980		21-80	
1978	NEC		July 4, 1980			
1981	BOCA(B)	BOCA (M)	June 4, 1985			
1981	NEC		May 14, 1982			
1983	CABO 1&2 FAMILY	June 4, 1985	July 19, 1985		125-85	
1984	BOCA(B)	BOCA (M)	July 19, 1985		125-85	
1984	NEC		December 27, 1984		92-84	
1986	CABO 1 & 2 FAMILY		Nov 19, 1987, Nov 10, 1988, Dec 14, 1989		19-87, 19-87 AM, 36-89 AM	
1987	BOCA(B)	BOCA (M)	Nov 19, 1987, Nov 10, 1988, Dec 14, 1989		19-87, 19-87 AM, 36-89 AM	
1987	NEC		April 13, 1989			
1988	CABO(AM)		November 22, 1990		17-90 AM	
1989	CABO		November 22, 1990		21-80	
1990	BOCA (B), BOCA(B)-AM		November 22, 1990, Feb 25, 1993		17-90 AM, 84-82	
1990	BOCA(B)	BOCA (M)	May 17, 1990		17-80E	
1990	NEC		August 2, 1990			
1992	CABO 1 & 2 FAMILY		January 31, 1995		20-94	
1993	BOCA(B)	BOCA (M)	January 31, 1995		20-94	
1993	NEC		January 31, 1995		21-94	
1995	CABO		July 1, 1997		4-97	
1996	BOCA(B)	IMC	July 1, 1997		3-97	
1996	NEC		January 1, 1997			
2000	IBC IRC	IECC	February 12, 2002		35-01, 36-01(IRC)	
2000	IMC	IFGC	February 12, 2002		35-01, 36-01	

BOCA (B): Building Official & Code Administration (Building Code), BOCA (M): Building Official & Code Administration (Mechanical Code), BOCA (AM): BOCA as Amended,
CABO: Council of American Building Officials (1 & 2 Family Dwelling Code), NEC: National Electrical Code, IBC: International Building Code, IMC: International Mechanical Code, IRC:
International Residential Code, IECC: International Energy Conservation Code, IFGC: International Fuel Gas Code.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

UTILITY-CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS REVISED

DPS specifications for utility construction within public rights-of-way and easements have been revised and updated. These specifications, entitled *Montgomery County Specifications for Utility Construction Permit*, are available from the department and will soon be available online at our website under the “Online Document” heading and the “Roads” sub-heading. These specifications are effective immediately.

Two of the more significant updates incorporated into these specifications are:

Revised requirements regarding the use of steel plates to temporarily cover excavations within roadways

Revised Utility Work Zone Traffic Control Requirements. Permittees may now use a Certified Traffic Manager to prepare most Site Specific Traffic Control Plans. Using a Certified Traffic Manager will eliminate the need for review and approval of Site Specific Traffic Control Plans by the Traffic Engineering and Operations Section of the Department of Public Works and Transportation. Please refer to the specifications for detailed information.

Should you have any questions or need assistance regarding these specifications, please contact either Permitting Services Specialists Jerry Oden at 240-777-6351, or Danny Ratliff at 240-777-6302.



SEPTIC SYSTEM REPAIR

Slowly-flowing drains, gurgling sounds emanating from a bathtub, wet spots in the yard--these are all symptoms of a failing septic system, or are they?

Builders and homeowners may at times have to deal with a failing septic system. The typical system works well with very little attention for 25 to 30 years. At some point, however, they **all** cease to function properly.

Maintenance and care of a septic system are very important. An abused system can fail in only a few years. The point is to do things right so that the system will last as long as possible. The Well & Septic Section has a brochure, prepared by the University of Maryland, that describes the typical maintenance schedule for your septic system.

If your septic system exhibits some of the symptoms listed above, you should follow these guidelines:

First, contact the Well & Septic Office at 240-777-6320. If your house was built after 1945, a sketch of the completed septic installation should be on file. A copy will help you locate the key components of the system.

Next, have the septic tank uncovered and pumped. Make sure that you hire an experienced company. What they see when they

open the tank and pump it out will go a long way toward determining the problem. If the problem is between the house and the septic tank, hire a plumber to make the required repairs.

If the problem appears to be a “backed up” drain field, the problem is more serious, and you’ll need a reputable septic contractor and a permit from DPS to replace the drain field.

Application for the replacement permit is fairly simple. The Well & Septic Section will need a current house-location survey or any other scaled drawing that depicts the boundaries of your property and the “footprint” of your house. This survey will form the basis for the drawing that will direct the septic contractor to install the new drain field. The application form is a single page that you can complete at DPS. Once you’ve made your application, a Well & Septic Permitting Services Specialist will gather all the available information about your property. If there are suitable percolation test results on file, and a preliminary field visit indicates that a satisfactory replacement area exists, the permit will be issued within a week or so.



If percolation-test results are not available for your property (typically, this is the case for older homes), the Well & Septic Section will schedule expedited percolation tests with your excavator. This means that the contractor and the inspector will meet at your property to excavate test pits with a backhoe to determine the soil conditions. If the soil conditions meet established guidelines for a conventional drain field or a Sand Mound System (see below), your application will move directly to the design/issuance stage.

If the soil tests indicate that soil conditions are **not** adequate for a conventional system, your property will then be evaluated for a type of septic system frequently known as “I/A,” meaning “Innovative and Alternative.”

Innovative systems are any type of experimental sewage-disposal system under study/in limited use within the County or state. Systems of this type currently in use in the County include Drip Irrigation, Low Pressure Distribution, and Sand Mound systems with slow infiltration rates (The Sand Mound is considered to be a conventional system when soil-infiltration rates are two minutes to 60 minutes per inch. However, when the rates exceed 60 minutes per inch, such a system is considered to be of the I/A variety.)

Once the site evaluation is complete, you will be given a list of I/A systems that appear to be appropriate for your property. The County does not specify the type of system that you must use; you are allowed to decide which system best meets your needs. Your Well and Septic Permitting Services Specialist is available to explain the technology and help you through the process.

Next, you'll need the services of a qualified engineer or designer for the system that you have selected. In some cases, such as with Drip Irrigation systems, the system vendor(s) will provide design services as part of the purchase arrangement. A list of Drip Irrigation vendors is available from the Well and Septic Section. Other kinds of I/A systems are custom designed for the actual conditions present on your property. A list of engineers/designers is also available from DPS.

Your engineer/designer will submit a plan for review by the Well & Septic staff. If the plan appears to be appropriate for your property, a written legal agreement, known as a "Declaration of Covenant for Septic System Use," will be drafted by the Well & Septic Section and forwarded to you for review. This document, which is required by Montgomery County Executive Regulations (#28-93am), establishes system-use parameters, allows for long-term systemic monitoring by DPS, and notifies potential buyers of the septic system in place on the property.

If the legal agreement meets with your approval, you and the Director of DPS sign it, and you have it recorded in the Land Records of Montgomery County.

Thereafter, the permit is issued, and system installation begins.

If you have any questions regarding the installation of a replacement drain field, conventional or I/A, please call the well & Septic Section at 240-777-6320.

NEW EMPLOYEES

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce several new DPS employees:

Derek Isensee joined DPS on June 2, 2003, as a Permitting Services Inspector ("PSI") in the Sediment Control/Stormwater Inspection Section in the Division of Land Development. Derek reports to Permitting Services Manager ("PSM") Mike Reahl. Most recently, Derek worked for the Frederick County Office of Technical Support as an Environmental Inspector II. Prior to that, he worked for the Catocin and Frederick Soil Conservation District and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Derek has an Associate of Arts Degree from Frederick Community College and expects to earn his Bachelor's Degree this year.

Ye Jiang became a DPS employee on July 28, 2003. She is a Permitting Services Specialist (Structural) in the Division of Building Construction under the supervision of PSM Hadi Mansouri. Before joining DPS, Ye was employed as a Project Engineer with Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern, Inc. Her resume includes experience with the California Department of Transportation. Ye has B.S. and M.S. degrees in Civil Engineering and is a Licensed Professional Engineer in Virginia and California.

On July 28, 2003, another new hire for Mike Reahl, James Nichols, assumed his duties as a Sediment Control/Stormwater PSI. James comes to us from Prince George's County where he was a Construction Standards Inspector. He has a B.S. degree in Biology from Salisbury State University.

The Director's Office staff grew by one on August 11, 2003, when Yung-Tsung Kang

becomes the DPS Senior Information Technology Specialist for GIS services. Yung-Tsung will report to Manager III for automation Tom Laycock. Yung-Tsung is currently employed as a Senior Project GIS Analyst/Developer at CH2M Hill, a global engineering company. He has a B.S. in Soil and Water Conservation, an M.S. in Environmental Engineering, and a PhD. in Resource Development.

Building Construction welcomed PSI Michael Raffael on Monday, July 28, 2003. Mike works for PSM Phil Waclawski. Mike came to us from his position as an electrical inspector with Prince George's County. He also worked as a foreman for several electrical contractors. Mike holds Master Electrician's licenses in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia and is Vice-President of the International Association of Electrical Inspectors.

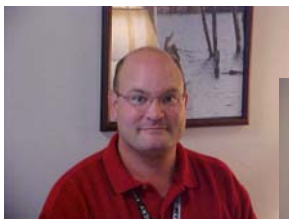
Please join us in welcoming these individuals to their new work assignments.



Ye Jiang, seated, and
Derek Isensee



Michael Raffael



James Nichols



Yung-Tsung Kang

PROFICIENCY ADVANCEMENTS

Proficiency advancements are non-competitive promotions that recognize an employee's readiness to assume the duties of the mid-level or the highest classification at which his or her position has been budgeted. Most proficiency advancements in DPS require completion of occupationally-specific certification requirements for promotion to the highest classification level.

We are pleased to announce the following proficiency advancements:

- 5/18 Brian Kim – Permitting Services Inspector II (Sediment Control/Stormwater Management)
- 5/18 Ron Milberg – Permitting Services Inspector II (Sediment Control/Stormwater Management)
- 6/29 Paolo Toschi – Permitting Services Inspector III (Mechanical)
- 7/13 Vito Bellafigliore – Permitting Services Inspector III (Mechanical)
- 7/13 Tom Rhinehart – Permitting Services Inspector III (Commercial Building)
- 8/10 Bill Martin – Permitting Services Inspector II (Sediment Control/Stormwater Management)

The Permitting Services Inspector III promotes all passed qualifying examinations and credentialing reviews in their occupational specialties.

Congratulations (Pictured) Tom, Bill, Vito, Brian, and Ron! Paolo is on vacation.



INFORMATION REQUESTS: PROCEDURES & FEES

Everyday, DPS employees receive requests for information from our paper and electronic files. Many such requests can be handled over the phone and by access to our automated permit system. Some customers request copies of official documents, or wish to have the documents produced for introduction at judicial proceedings.

DPS staff will do their best to accommodate all requests as quickly as possible. According to County procedures, any employee who has documents available for review is a "Custodian" for those documents and may release/copy them, pursuant to applicable procedures.

The "Official Custodian" for DPS is Assistant Director William Boyajy. The Official Custodian is ultimately responsible for the maintenance and release of documents under the provisions of County procedures and the Maryland Public Information Act.

The information that follows below replicates information available at our website.

- An information request is a request to review/copy/receive copies of documents maintained by the department.
- Montgomery County Executive Regulation #27-01AM, "Requests Under the Maryland Public Information Act ('MPIA')," prescribes the procedures and the fees (shown below) for information requests.
- No fee is due if the total charge for the request is under \$1.00, exclusive of postage and delivery charges.
- DPS accepts information requests verbally, by fax, by email, or by use of the "Request For Public Information" form (DPS may require the form for certain kinds of requests.). **For information or forms related to information requests or any DPS program, please contact us at the addresses/phone numbers below.**

Processing time for information requests varies according to workload/the complexity of the request. Most requests are processed in no more than ten workdays; many can be processed on the day of the request. The MPIA provides a thirty-day response period for information requests.

NOTE: There are no microfilm/fiche records for permits issued prior to October 17, 1986.

Photocopying and Reproductions

A) Letters or legal-sized documents (not to exceed 8½ by 14 inches) and paper faxes	\$0.15 per page or side
B) Large-size document (i.e., in excess of letter or legal size, but less than large-size plan) and Microfilm or Microfiche reproductions	\$1.00 per page or side
C) Large-size plans (plans larger than 8½ x 14)	\$2.00 per page or side

Certified Copies

Written certifications that copies are true copies of DPS records	\$1.00 per page
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Staff Time for Research

A) First two hours of combined staff time	No charge
B) Each 15 minutes or fraction in excess of two hours	\$8.00 (\$32.00 per hour)

Postage

Actual costs of mailing or delivering

For inquiries or additional information, please contact the Department of Permitting Services at 240) 777-6300, or see the [DPS Phone Directory](#) for the phone number of specific program areas, or visit our website at www.permits.emontgomery.gov or, FAX us at 240 777-6263 or E-mail us at dps@montgomerycountymd.gov, or mail your comments to: Department of Permitting Services 255 Rockville Pike, 2nd Floor Rockville, Maryland 20850-4166.

DPS office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



DPSD/OCR ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ("EDMP")

Each day, DPS converts ("images") applications, permits, construction drawings, and related documents to electronic format by scanning them. This "day-forward" imaging process is performed by two full-time DPS staff with assistance from one temporary clerical staff.

In addition, since 1998, over 1 million existing paper, mylar, microfilm and microfiche documents have been converted to electronic format. DPS is currently "indexing" these historical documents, which entails inserting identifying information into a database (e.g., permit number, address, etc.) to allow rapid retrieval of stored electronic images by multiple attributes. In FY01 and FY02, DPS scanned additional paper documents to electronic format. DPS has had, on average, eight temporary clerical staff dedicated to indexing these historical documents.

Staff from DPS and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation ("DOCR") recently evaluated a program at the Liberty Correctional Facility in Tallahassee, Florida, where inmates were responsible for many advanced information services, including imaging, indexing, and GIS-support services. DPS and DOCR staffs were very favorably impressed with the entire operation. The program provides up-to-date job skills for the population and improved prospects for post-incarceration employment; accreditation for education units mastered during the program; significant reductions

in document-imaging costs; income for inmates; and heightened personal esteem for program participants.

DPS and DOCR are in the process of implementing an Electronic Document Management Program ("EDMP") at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility ("MCCF") modeled on the Florida program. The first phase of the EDMP will involve indexing scanned images. The second and third phases will entail, respectively, preparing, imaging, and indexing historical documents; and performing day-forward imaging at MCCF as an adjunct to DPS imaging operations. For all phases, a joint DOCR/DPS team will perform follow-up evaluations and recommend process refinements.

The EDMP will use four DPS personal computers ("PC's") that will be relocated to the MCCF and connected through the County data-communications network to the DPS Permit System and imaging database. The first phase will begin with inmates indexing the electronic document images on the MCCF PC's. The indexed information will be posted to the DPS document-image database. The inmates will be supervised by a workforce leader trained on-site in the DPS indexing process.

For the second phase, DPS will provide PC's and scanning equipment (large-format scanners and high-speed desktop scanners) to allow imaging of historical paper documents. Inmates will prepare, image, and index the paper documents and update the existing DPS document-image database with pertinent index information. All documents will be returned to DPS for quality assurance review and disposition.

The third phase will expand the system to support day-forward imaging services to augment DPS operations. This phase will bolster imaging operations during periods of increased development activity and periods of unexpected staff shortages. This phase will utilize imaging equipment provided in the previous phase.

POTOMAC VALLEY AIA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DEMANDS RESPONSE

by Robert Hubbard, Director, DPS

In his recent column in the chapter newsletter, the president of the American Institute of Architects Potomac Valley Chapter ("AIAPVC") takes a baseless shot at this department and my fellow code officials in Montgomery County. I wish to set the record straight.

In the course of affirming the benefits of the Maryland Building Rehabilitation Code ("MBRC"), Allen Neyman cites a single seminar on this subject that he attended recently that was sponsored by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development ("DHCD"). What he apparently is unaware of and neglects to mention is that the seminar and others like it are the result of the considerable effort undertaken by, among others, DPS Building Construction Division Chief Shahriar Amiri to educate the design community on the letter and spirit of the MBRC. In fact, for the more than two years since the adoption of the MBRC, Mr. Amiri and his staff have spent countless hours explaining the code to design professionals.

In his article, Mr. Neyman states that "Montgomery County code officials bagged the seminar." While it is true that no DPS staff attended the seminar, this fact was hardly a basis for Mr. Neyman to conclude that in Montgomery County "smart [i.e., "Smart Growth" and, by extension, the MBRC] is on the way out." He then states that our presumed indifference was "duly noted."

Mr. Neyman, let me acquaint you with what DPS has done to educate our staff and customers about the MBRC and related issues. In the spring of 2001, our building-construction staff attended introductory MBRC seminars sponsored by DHCD. In July of 2001, DPS contracted with Eric N. Mayl, P. E., the very same instructor whom you cite in your article, to provide advanced training on the MBRC to our staff and to code officials from the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg. We have promulgated Executive Regulation #35-01 that adopts and amends the current International Building Code, more specifically, Section 34 that adopts the MBRC as the standard for existing buildings in Montgomery County. The July/August 2001 issue of this newsletter introduced the MBRC to DPS customers. The code has been available in our office for 18 months in hardcopy and in an electronic version that may be downloaded from our website at "permits.emontgomery.org." By virtue of our efforts at educating the public, most of our clients understand that the MBRC is a statewide code that the department must enforce, or risk losing millions of dollars in state funds.

Contrary to the President's Message, this department and the County have invested too much in training staff and in embracing Smart Growth to ignore the MBRC. We believe in the value of maintaining and reusing our existing buildings because we know that an under-used or vacant building is far less safe than one that is legally occupied. To anyone who has sought permits in the County, these facts should be readily apparent.

I want to thank those of our readers, many of whom are members of AIAPVC, who have submitted and successfully completed projects following MBRC standards. We will continue to strive to provide AIAPVC members with the highest level of service.

Mr. Neyman has personally apologized to me and Shahriar Amiri for his article. We have accepted his apology. Furthermore, to assure a continuing excellent relationship between AIAPVC and DPS, Mr. Neyman has agreed to contact me before lending credence, especially in print, to unfounded rumors about County or DPS programs or policies.

DPS QUIK PICS



Pictured: Douglas Duncan, Scott Reilly, Marilyn Praisner, and Joseph Adler. Mr. Reilly is accepting a Safety Award for Permitting Services at the recent Montgomery County's Best ceremony.



Residential Building Inspector Mary Howard with her 7 week old daughter, Eva.



*"THE TWO ANGELAS" !



Scenes from the second DPS Ice Cream Social held for employees' enjoyment.



*Permit Techs Angela Clark (seated) and Angela Bell.





Department of Permitting Services
255 Rockville Pike, Second Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4166

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(240) 777-6300

- (240) 777-6210 To: Schedule an Inspection Cancel an Inspection Find the status of a permit Receive documents via fax**
(240) 777-6259 Complaints
(240) 777-6370 Questions related to residential building permits (new construction, additions, alterations, sheds, decks, fences, swimming pools), commercial building permits, demolition permits, fire-alarm permits, fire-sprinkler permits, Use-and-Occupancy Certificates, and Historic Area Work Permits
- (240) 777-6320** Questions related to subdivision development, permits to work in the right-of-way, stormwater-management concepts, sediment-control permits, and well-and-septic permits
- (240) 777-6240** Questions related to zoning, setbacks, information, building-height restrictions, special exceptions, electrical permits and licenses, mechanical permits, vendor licenses, sign permits, and Permitting Services records
- (240) 777-6260** Division of Casework Management
(240) 777-6350 Division of Land Development
(240) 777-6200 Division of Building Construction
(240) 777-6360 Office of the Director
(240) 777-6256 TTY

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